

K-237

Whichcote Castle
Near Fairlee
1750

Paul Whichcote (1685-1757) purchased 100 acres of "Perch Meadow" and "Woodlands Intention" in 1739 located on the side "of the main road that leads from the church (St. Paul's) to Worton Creek and near the said Paul Whichcote's Plantation".¹ Whichcote's name appears as a witness to several wills earlier than 1739, and later in 1744, he purchased another 150 acres of the same tracts mentioned above.² In the late 1740's and early 1750's he was appointed Commissioner of the Peace and Justice for Inspection of Tobacco, along with Bedingfield Hands, Jervis Spence, Hugh Wallis and others, all prominent business men of that period.³

In 1752 "Paul Whichcote, Marriner" wrote his will which was probated in 1757. He appointed his wife Mary and son Paul to be co-executors. He bequeathed his plantation to be equally divided between his son and daughter, Sarah and 50 acres to his grandson Benjamin Wright.⁴ The appraisers of Paul's estate included John Wickes and John Carvill. His personal inventory amounted to @436.10 and included several books, shoemaker's tools, seven Negroes and an indentured servant, beside the usual items found on a modest plantation which grew primarily tobacco and wheat.⁵

The house which Paul built on his plantation had a very common for 18th century dwellings throughout the Chesapeake area. However, its roof slope was a little steeper than most remaining dwellings of this period. An outstanding feature is its brickwork. Three sides are laid in all header bond.

It is reputed to have a glazed date of 1750 in its gable, but due to the fact that it has been whitewashed and the all header bond, it is impossible to determine without removal of the whitewash. The initials WPM can be determined, even without cleaning. These are the initials of the builders – Paul and Mary Whichcote.

From an outline in the north gable, it is clear to see that the original kitchen was located there. Undoubtedly this is the reason that common bond was used on this gable.

Around the turn of the century a two story frame wing was constructed on the east side of the house. Judging from the description in the WPA Guide the house had a plan which consisted of hall-parlor in the brick section, two rooms in the kitchen wing and the aforementioned two story east wing. Each of these five rooms had stairs to the chambers above.

When the kitchen wing was removed, the connecting door was converted into a window. About the same time, the interior was gutted and a new stair was installed in the living room in such a way as to ascend between the two bed chambers above. Little, if any of Paul Whichcote's interior remains in the house. The house is the product of successive remodeling caused by periods of neglect.

The descendants of Paul Whichcote retained title to the farm until 1791 when the grandchildren sold the property to Peregrine Letherbury who later transferred it to Fray and Thomas.⁶ In the 1852 Tax Assessment, John S. Thomas is listed as owner of 40 acres of "Peach Meadow", an obvious misspelling of Perch on which there was an "Old Brick House in Bad

Repair." On the 1860 Martinet Map, Thomas is still listed in this location, but by 1877, when the Lake Griffing Stevenson Atlas was printed, the farm was owned by Robert Nicholson, a nurseryman whose residence was located on an adjoining farm. Although it left the Nicholson family for many years, the current owner is Robert Nicholson's great granddaughter.⁷

1. Land Records, Lib. JS 22, fol. 449.
2. Land Records, Lib. 6, fol. 188.
3. Commission Records, Maryland Hall of Records, Nov. 9, 1747, p. 82.
4. Wills, Lib. 30, fol. 311.
5. Inventories, Box 19, folder 60.
6. Land Records, Lib. BC 3, fol. 212, 214, 215.
7. Most of the research has been accomplished by James E. White, III, New Bern, NC.

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Witch Coach, Wych Cote, Goblin Hill, Witch Coat Castle 18th Century
Chestertown
Private

Witch Coat Castle is a small one and one-half story three bay brick building with a header bond facade, a detail rarely seen outside of Chestertown and Annapolis. The building stands on ground once a part of Fairlee Manor. Its name may derive from "wych" or "wych-elm" the 17th century English word for common elm and cote or cottage.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

K-237
MAGI #1502375204

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Witch Coach, Wych Cote, Goblin Hill

AND/OR COMMON

Witch Coat Castle

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Near Melitota on Fairlee Still Pond Road (MD 298)

JUL 2/1941

CITY, TOWN

Chestertown

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

☒ VICINITY OF

First

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Kent

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☒ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC☒ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☐ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☒ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☐ COMMERCIAL☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ GOVERNMENT☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ MILITARY☐ MUSEUM☐ PARK☒ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ RELIGIOUS☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ OTHER**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Mr. & Mrs. Calvin Welch, Jr.

Telephone #:(301) 778-0795

STREET & NUMBER

Witch Coat Castle

CITY, TOWN

Chestertown

☒ VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 21620

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Kent County Courthouse

Liber #: EHP 58

Folio #: 571

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Chestertown

STATE

Maryland 21620

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

K-237

CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT
☒ GOOD
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED
☒ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Witch Coate Castle, despite its name, is a small, brick cottage which stands on a sunny hillside on Route 298, north of Fairlee. The building faces west.

Witch Coate is a one and one-half story, gable roofed building type commonly built in the Kent County countryside in the 18th century. It is three bays wide, with a central front entrance. Originally the building had a central rear entrance which has been replaced by a small window at the level of the present stair landing. Gable end chimneys are enclosed within the walls.

There are two gable dormers in the west roof slope. Although there were almost certainly two dormers in each roof slope originally, these have widely overhanging eaves and triangular applique in the tympanum which indicate their Victorian date. One dormer remains in the rear roof slope; the other was removed when a modern rear wing was constructed.

Windows have 9/9 sash; their frames are set within old, beaded trim with sills which are also beaded on the lower edge. There are basement windows with iron bars in window bays. The original cellar entrance, beneath the present wing is unused.

The main entrance now has double louvered doors in a three foot door opening with a small transom light above. An earlier one bay entrance porch with shed roof and benches has been replaced by a small stoop.

The interior is modern. An open stair in the present living room probably replaces enclosed corner stair(s) commonly used in this house type.

The most outstanding feature of this old house is its brick work: corbelled eaves, a stepped water table laid in an irregular band, and all header bond on the front, south gable, and rear facades. In the gable are initials and a date, (reputedly 1750), now covered with paint.

The remaining gable is laid in common bond likely because the original kitchen wing, of which an outline of a steep gable roof is visible, stood against this wall. The wing, one and one-half story and reportedly of log (plank) construction, was destroyed about 50 years ago.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Witch Coate Castle is architecturally significant because it is one of the few remaining 18th century farmhouses of its type in the County. Although its original interior has vanished, its unusual brickwork remains. All header bond, common only in Chester-town and Annapolis, is rare even in these towns and even more unusual in country houses.

The house stands on the old Fairlee Manor. Its name may derive from "wych" or "wych-elm" the 17th century English word for witch or common elm and cote or cottage.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Marsha L. Fritz, Consultant

ORGANIZATION

Kent County Historical Society

DATE

August, 1977

STREET & NUMBER

Church Alley

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Chestertown

STATE

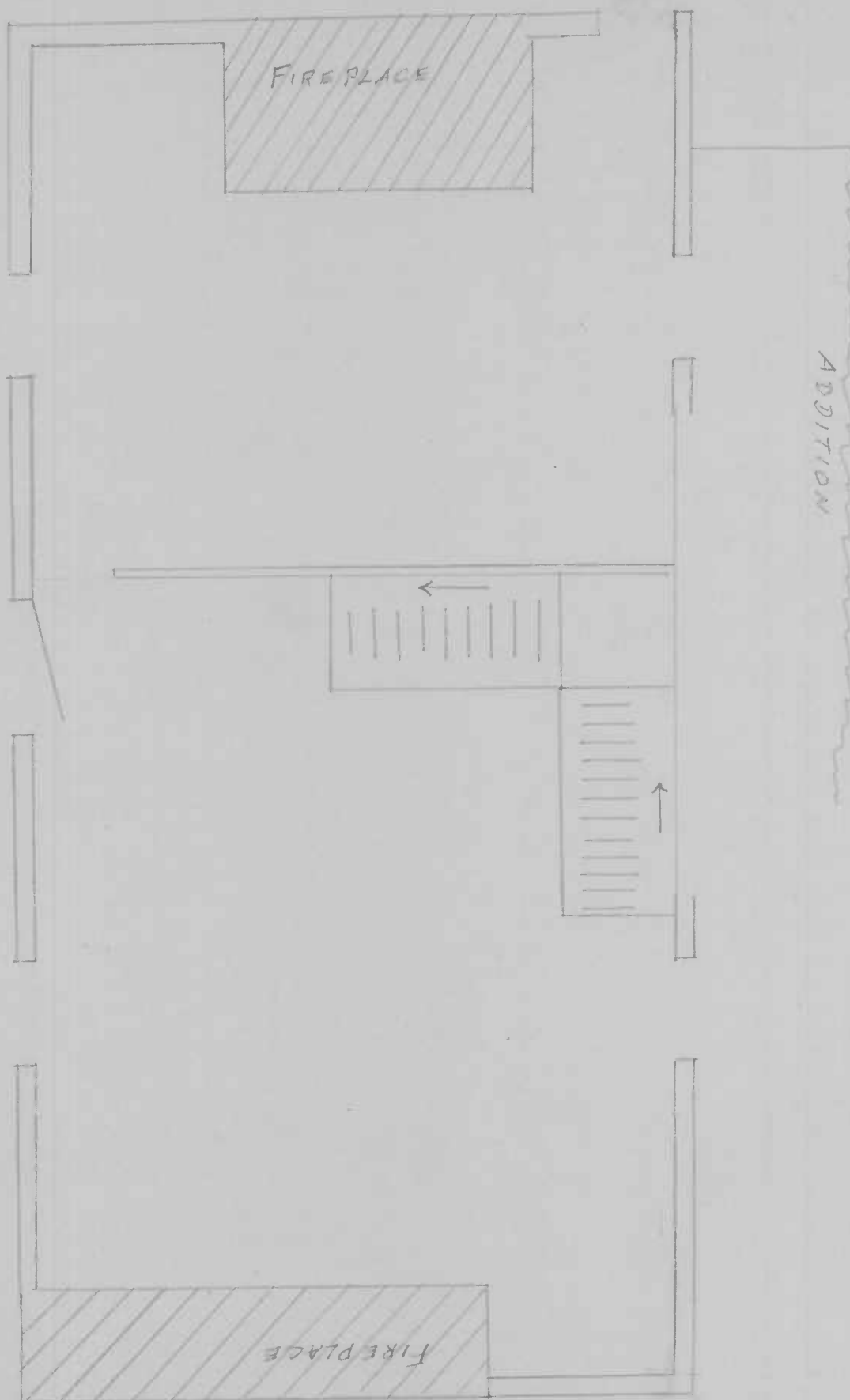
Maryland 21620

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

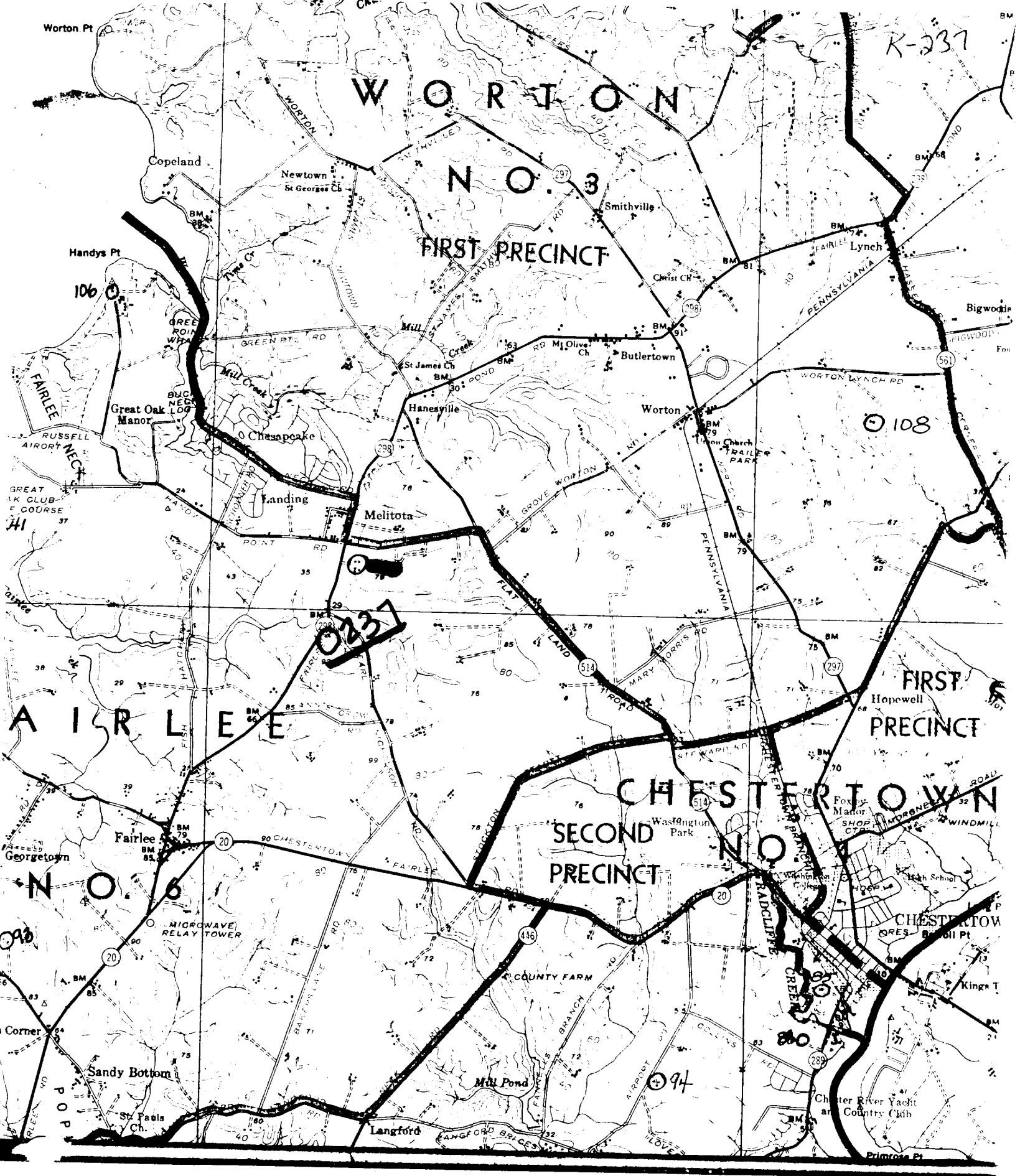
The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438

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WINDCOAT CASTLE 237





K-237

Witchcoale Castle U#1 TH 237

Road 298 Melrose Rd

Front - Buick Section

C Engstrom

Aug 1977